IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A hypodermic needle, comprising:

a hollow tube having an outer surface, an interior surface defining a bore, and an angled end with respect to a longitudinal axis of the tube, the end having an opening surrounded by an external peripheral rim, a front half region proximal to a piercing tip defined by the angled end, and a rear half region opposite the front half region;

wherein at least a portion of the external peripheral rim is beveled back at least 25% with respect to a wall thickness of the tube to form an internal beveled surface such that the internal beveled surface surrounds 20-70% of the opening and at least a portion of the internal beveled surface is in the rear half region; and

wherein the internal beveled surface is beveled from the outer surface to the interior surface in a direction towards the bore and away from the piercing tip.

2. (Original) The hypodermic needle of claim 1, wherein the at least a portion of the external peripheral rim is beveled back at least 30%.

3. (Original) The hypodermic needle of claim 1, wherein the at least a portion of the external peripheral rim is beveled back at least 35%.

4. (Original) The hypodermic needle of claim 1, wherein the at least a portion of the external peripheral rim is beveled back at least 40%.

5. (Original) The hypodermic needle of claim 1, wherein the at least a portion of the external peripheral rim is beveled back at least 50%.

6. (Original) The hypodermic needle of claim 1, wherein the internal beveled surface is curved.

7. (Previously Amended) The hypodermic needle of claim 6 wherein a circle coincident with the curvature of the internal beveled surface has a radius of curvature that is at least 25% with respect to the wall thickness.

Claims 8-9 (Withdrawn).

10. (Currently Amended) A hypodermic needle, comprising:

a hollow tube having an outer surface, an interior surface defining a bore, and an angled end with respects to a longitudinal axis of the tube, the end having a front half region proximal to a piercing tip defined by the angled end, and a rear half region opposite the front half region; the end having a means for reducing fluid stress at an entrance of the needle, the means for reducing fluid stress comprising an opening surrounded by an external peripheral rim wherein at least a portion of the external peripheral rim is beveled back at least 25% with respect to a wall thickness of the tube to form an internal beveled surface such that the internal beveled surface surrounds 20-70% of the opening[,] and at least a portion of the internal beveled surface is in the rear half region; and

wherein the internal beveled surface is beveled from the outer surface to the interior surface in a direction towards the bore and away from the cutting point.

11. (Currently Amended) In a hypodermic needle having an internal substantially cylindrical surface defining a bore; an external substantially cylindrical surface; an end angled with respect to a longitudinal axis of the needle, the end having an opening and defining a piercing tip; an outer peripheral rim, the rim partially surrounding a first region of the opening proximal to the piercing tip and connecting the external and internal cylindrical surfaces of the needle; the improvement, comprising:

an internal beveled surface on the internal surface of the needle surrounding 20-70% of a second region of said opening opposite the first region, wherein the degree of beveling back of the rim is at least 25% with respect to a wall thickness of the hypodermic needle; and wherein the internal beveled surface is beveled from the external substantially cylindrical surface to the

internal substantially cylindrical surface in a direction towards the bore and away from the piercing tip.

12. (Previously Amended) The hypodermic needle of claim 11, wherein at least a portion of the external peripheral rim is beveled back at least 30%.

13. (Previously Amended) The hypodermic needle of claim 11, wherein at least a portion of the external peripheral rim is beveled back at least 50%.

14. (Original) A method of preparing a sample, comprising withdrawing blood with the hypodermic needle of Claim 1.

15. (Currently Amended) In a method of preparing a sample, comprising:

withdrawing blood with a hypodermic needle, the hypodermic needle having an internal substantially cylindrical surface defining a bore; an external substantially cylindrical surface; an end angled with respect to a longitudinal axis of the needle, the end having an opening and defining a piercing tip; an outer peripheral rim, the rim partially surrounding a first region of the opening proximal to the piercing tip and connecting the external and internal cylindrical surfaces of the needle; the improvement comprising withdrawing blood with the hypodermic needle having an internal beveled surface on the internal surface of the hypodermic needle surrounding 20-70% of a second region of said opening opposite the first region, wherein the degree of beveling back of the rim is at least 25% with respect to a wall thickness of the hypodermic; and wherein the internal beveled surface is beveled from the external substantially cylindrical surface towards the internal substantially cylindrical surface in a direction towards the bore and away from the piercing tip.

16. (Original) A method of making the hypodermic needle of claim 1, comprising: beveling back an external peripheral rim of a hypodermic needle.

17. (Original) A method of making the hypodermic needle of claim 2, comprising:

beveling back an external peripheral rim of a hypodermic needle.

18. (Original) A method of making the hypodermic needle of claim 3, comprising: beveling back an external peripheral rim of a hypodermic needle.

19. (Original) A method of making the hypodermic needle of claim 7, comprising: beveling back an external peripheral rim of a hypodermic needle.

20. (Original) A method of making the hypodermic needle of claim 8, comprising: beveling back an external peripheral rim of a hypodermic needle.